



# U.S. Public Health Service Environmental Health Officer Professional Advisory Committee (EHOPAC)



## Meeting #219 Minutes, 11JUN19

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### I. Call to Order – CDR Michael Quinn, Chair

The meeting was called to order at 1300 EDT.

### II. Roll Call – LCDR Michele Dittrich, Administrative Team

Roll call was performed; a quorum was confirmed.

#### Voting Member Attendance Status: Present, Absent, Excused

Last Name	First Name	Rank	Status	Name of Alternate in Attendance
Bales	David	LCDR	Present	N/A
Bird	Bill	LCDR	Present	N/A
Bowser	Travis	LCDR	Present	N/A
Deptola	Matthew	LCDR	Present	N/A
Hensley	Jessica	CDR	Excused	CDR Leslie Jackanicz
Hubbard	Katie	CDR	Excused	CDR Michael Box
Kincaid	Erin	LT	Present	N/A
Kupper	Drew	CDR	Present	N/A
Leonard	Monica	CDR	Present	N/A
Merritt	Steven	LT	Present	N/A
Mutter	Jamie	CDR	Present	N/A
Otto	Jessica	CDR	Excused	LT Mark Otto
Oyster	Carolyn	CDR	Present	N/A
Piontkowski	Stephen	CAPT	Excused	CDR Kelli Mohler
Quinn	Mike	CDR	Present	N/A
Rodriguez	Luis	CDR	Present	N/A
Shugart	Jill	CAPT	Present	N/A
Valenti	Elizabeth	CDR	Excused	LCDR Lester Monique
Van Twuyver	Chris	CDR	Excused	N/A
Vaouli	Elena	CDR	Present	N/A

#### Voting Guests and Attendees Present

Last Name	First Name	Rank	Organization Represented
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

### III. Chief Professional Officer Report – RADM Kelly Taylor

- Uniform wear
  - Correct uniform wear is critical to the mission of USPHS. RADM Orsega has indicated that there will be focus on officer's uniform wear. Phone calls will be made or meetings set up with officers out of compliance. If the officer doesn't correct wear, letters of reprimand will be issued. No guidance or information on enforcement has been issued.
- All Hands Meeting
  - 13JUN19 1230-1330 EDT. Purpose is to provide additional information about the implementation of Modernization
    - Submit questions during meeting or afterwards to: [CorpsModernization@hhs.gov](mailto:CorpsModernization@hhs.gov)
    - Slides will be available after the meeting in the secure area of CCMIS.
- PHS Birthday Ball
  - 20 July in Rockville. Local Officers must sign up as attendance is limited. Information will be forthcoming.
- CCHQ positions
  - CCHQ has 11 openings for positions. O2-O6 Billets. Information has been distributed on the ListServ.
- The Deputy SG has scheduled meetings with the 27 chartered groups, including PAC Chairs and CPOs.
  - RADM Taylor meeting is scheduled for 14JUN19.

### IV. Chair Report – CDR Michael Quinn

- COF symposium.
  - Good turnout by EHOS as COF. ~60 EHOs participated in Category Day. CDR Quinn would like to acknowledge and thank the symposium planners for their hard work and scheduling. There will be a call for a category day planner for COF 2020 very soon.
  - First time EHO category was involved in a pre-deployment event as part of a pre-conference event. High participation and interest in EHO skillset and equipment.
  - EHOPAC sponsored NEHA exams during the conference. 6 officers sat for REHS exam at the COF.
- EHAC – [NEHA Annual Educational Conference & Exposition webpage](#)
  - CDR Quinn will give a recruitment presentation during EHAC.
  - There will be a uniform services environmental health education program on 7JUL19. More information about events at EHAC will be distributed on the listserv.
- FDA held a Commissioned Corps Awareness Day in May. Three officers represented the EHO category during the event.
- Executive Committee Activities:
  - Reviewing 2020 category benchmarks. Updated benchmarks will be uploaded onto CCMIS website soon.
  - Reviewing EHOPAC bylaws and making necessary changes. RADM Schwartz has indicated a need to standardize the PAC charters and bylaws, and as a result, additional changes may be made to the PAC's documents.
  - EC is planning for high turnover (9 positions) on PAC next year.
  - Reviewing and updating subcommittee SOPS.
  - Supporting and planning for ongoing training initiative. LT Merritt will present on Safety Officer Responsibilities during Deployment. Information about additional trainings will be available on the website and distributed on the listserv.
  - Continuing to identify liaisons, groups, and committees to partner with. There will be increased USPHS participation in AMSUS Annual Meeting
  - Responding to IT security and information management requirements and reviews. Renewed initiative to look at all computer systems and sites used by categories.

- Listserv
  - FDA, EPA, and Coastguard Officers were removed from the listserv. Please re-subscribe if you were removed.

## V. Chair-Elect Report – CDR Elena Vaouli

- Large turnover of EHOPAC Voting Members in 2020
  - Anticipate 9 vacant seats
  - Nomination solicitation projected to occur August 2019
  - Terms will start January 2020 through December 2022
- EHOPAC planning and preparation for turnover
  - Ensure all SOPS are complete, understandable, and cover all major subcommittee tasks with adequate detail and information.
  - Establish formal process for orienting new VMs
  - EHOPAC EC will hold Q&A session(s) for those interested in VM positions, expectations, responsibilities, etc.

## VI. Ex-Officio – CDR Chris van Twuyver

- Symposium- Presented EHO Deployment skills training to the Nurse-PAC with EHOs including: CDR Quinn, CDR Vaouli, CDR Horsch, CDR Gibbs, LCDR Bird, and LT Ferry.
- Currently serving as the EC POC to the Training and Events and Readiness Subcommittees, one of the functions of this role is facilitating the creation and delivery of EHO training classes.
- LT Merritt is scheduled to offer the next EHOPAC training class on 6/27/2019, his training will provide an overview of risk management and the Safety Officer role during deployments.
- Several training classes are being considered for inclusion into next year’s pre-conference training session (if possible) including: water sampling/safety, food safety, shelter sanitation, occupational health, industrial hygiene, EH in disaster recovery, and leadership training.
- I will also be reviewing the T&E and Readiness Subcommittee SOPs with CDR Vaouli and CDR Quinn- with an eye towards ensuring that the SOPs adequately cover the duties expected from each PAC subcommittee. The EC initiated several changes to subcommittee duties this year and we want to make sure that the changes are memorialized in the subcommittee SOPs
- I will also be working with CDR Quinn and CDR Vaouli to update the EHO Bylaws

## VII. Secretary/Treasurer Report – CDR Jessica Hensley

- Minutes are posted on the EHOPAC webpage. Efforts are being made to post these minutes in a more efficient manner to be consistent with bylaws.
- Coins are \$10 and are available by contacting: CDR Brian Cook, [brian\\_cook@nps.gov](mailto:brian_cook@nps.gov)

## VIII. Executive Committee Liaison Report – CAPT Jill Shugart

- Working with COMMS to update the EHOPAC Newsletter
- Increasing liaisons and information flow with other EH and IH organizations
- Anonymous Feedback System (Q&A)

**Q:** Does EHOPAC leadership have any insight as to why all EHO roles were told to stand down for the USNS Comfort deployment? The Navy seems to have changed their staffing requirements, but it's hard to imagine that issues like sanitation and industrial hygiene won't be a major part of the mission.

**A:** The staffing requirements for the USNS Comfort deployment have changed, and at this time, the Epi, Public Health, IT Specialist, EHO, and Industrial Hygienist positions will not be deploying.

**Q:** *When will EHOPAC leadership stand behind officers and demand program support, especially in terms of time, for officers to incorporate physical training into their duty day. If we are expected to meet Army standards for weight, then we should have Army style program support for physical training.*

**A:** We have received a question regarding time off for USPHS officers to meet basic readiness standards, including height and weight standards. We have provided a response to this issue several times during past seasonal PAC meetings. Please talk with your supervisor if you have concerns on how to incorporate time during the work day to meet basic readiness, including height and weight standards.

**Q:** Recently, the US Navy approved the use of flats for female uniform wear (3501.54). Heels are not necessarily comfortable nor good for the feet and legs of the females wearing them. Is there any indication when this potential uniform change will be incorporated into USPHS female uniform regulations?

**A:** We reached out to the USPHS Uniform Coordinator and they reported that the Corps is looking into several amendments to the uniform policies at this time. We do not have any specific information to share, but if more information becomes available on this topic, we will communicate it as soon as possible.

## IX. Liaison Reports

### RedDOG – CDR Robert Horsch

- Readiness
  - June 2019: 93.7% of officers met readiness standards.
  - EHO Category was 4<sup>th</sup> at 95.3%.
  - As of 1JUN19, there were 343 officers in EHO Category.
  - The ASH is reviewing 'Team Readiness'. Readiness status is not just impacting individual officers, but a team's ability to deploy as well.
- Deployments
  - USNS Comfort Humanitarian Mission- clinical and behavioral health roles
  - Customs and Border Protection (CPB) Mission- officers staffing for transition sites. 16 people covering four sites since January 2019. Primarily clinical and behavioral health officers.
  - ICE Health Service Corps- officers facilitating transition of people coming across the border to resettlement position in ICE. 8 sites and 80 officers/month. Primarily clinical and behavioral health officers.
  - Opioid Rapid Response Teams (ORRT)- in conjunction with CDC. 14 positions on a 45 person team per month. Primarily clinical and behavior health positions. CDC has made a training platform available on Opioid Issues and Response. Strongly advise EHOS to take course. See Appendix below for additional information. Also, more information will be distributed on the listserv.
  - Two Remote Area Medical (RAM) events scheduled in July. Formal announcement will be made during All Hands meeting. One event in Oklahoma. The vast majority of the roster is filled. Operation Lonestar is the second RMA event, July 22-26. Safety officers will have the opportunity to participate.

### American Academy of Sanitarians – CAPT (Ret.) Gary Noonan

- The American Academy of Sanitarians (AAS) is an organization that elevates the standards, improves the practice, advances the professional proficiency and promotes the highest levels of ethical conduct among professional sanitarians in every field of environmental health.

- The AAS was formed in 1956 to improve the environmental health status of individuals through certification of those professionally credentialed environmental health practitioners and other environmental health professionals.
- The Academy membership covers the breadth of environmental health. Certification by the Academy is open to persons who have attained high professional stature through leadership and accomplishment in the field of environmental health and meet the criteria for selection as a Diplomate.
- Since its inception, over 580 professional sanitarians have been awarded Diplomate status in the Academy.
- Eight Diplomates have also qualified for certification as Diplomate Laureates (Diplomates who meet additional criteria and exhibit exceptional professional growth, accomplishment and leadership in the sanitarian profession.)
- The Academy invites and encourages professionally credentialed EHOs with qualities of outstanding competence and leadership to become certified as Diplomates. More information can be found on the [AAS website](#).

### **Commissioned Corps Women's Issues Advisory Board – CDR Monica Leonard**

- Mission is to analyze and identify key issues that impact women. Currently developing action plan to address issues related to deployment, pregnancy, and domestic abuse.
- Several subcommittees including wellness, sexual harassment, health and outreach subcommittee.
- Meet every other month. More information available on the [CCWIAB webpage](#).
- Coin sales occur at Symposium annually, looking to expand sales through website.
- Just released: [Resource Guide for USPHS Officers Getting Married or Getting Divorced, and for Dependents Surviving the Death of a USPHS Officer \(Version 3.0, May 2019\)](#)

### **Environmental Health Accreditation Council – CAPT Donald Williams**

- Annual EHAC meeting before NEHA (see CDR Quinn's notes above).
- Information about JRCOSTEP window was provided to EHAC and was distributed in their newsletter.
- CAPT Shugart would like to acknowledge and thank CAPT Williams for 30 years of service to the USPHS and EHO Category.

### **Junior Officer Advisory Group – LCDR Beth Wittry**

- The next JOAG general meeting 14JUN (1300-1400)
- Next Journeyman Speaker Series is 12JUL (1300-1400)
- Info on these events are on the [JOAG Meetings webpage](#).

## **X. Open Discussion**

### **Communications – CDR Rodriguez and LCDR Bird**

- COMMS and the IT Subcommittees are working to roll out a condensed newsletter that is organized like a table of contents and will be released once per month
- Advantages are that it will be quicker for readers to review the headlines and select the articles they are interested in; much easier to read in the field on a mobile device, a lot less work for the Publications Team, and a quick turnaround
- It will be a digital table of contents that is 508 compliant
- We pilot newsletter for 3 months and get feedback from the EHOPAC EC and readers
- A naming contest will start soon. Start thinking of ideas.

### **Marketing and Recruitment – CDR Otto and LCDR Bales**

- AAP is currently tracking 11 boarded applicants (5 expire in Nov & 6 expire in Dec). 9 applicants still seeking positions. If any hiring official needs list of boarded applicants, they can contact [David.Bales@ihs.gov](mailto:David.Bales@ihs.gov)

- The JR COSTEP application opened on 6/3 and closes 7/3. M&R is actively pushing out this information through the adopt-a-school reps and encourage all to spread the word too. The information has been sent out on the listserv.
- COSTEP workgroup developing a virtual COSTEP Symposium. More information to come.
- Marketing and Materials workgroup is developing a Modernization Recruitment Q&A document and updating other documents like the EHO Fact Sheet. Will be distributed on webpage.
- LCDR Bales will be presenting EH opportunities in the PHS at NEHA on July 10. Any officers in attendance should join the session. Faculty members and students ought to be in attendance.

### **Mentoring and Orientation – CDR Leonard and CDR Oyster**

- Recent Actions/Activities
  - Will soon be forced to close down the HSO Database for mentoring pairing due to PII security concerns;
  - Updating EHO Welcome Packet with recommendations made by the EHOPAC EC to publish for the category
- Upcoming Needs/Priorities
  - Subcommittee must develop a new/creative way to track mentor pairings going forward when the HSO Mentoring database is disabled.
  - Developing a new process to receive mentoring applications before the next mentoring year starts on October 1, 2019- September 30, 2020.

### **Readiness –LT Merritt and LT Ferry**

- "Risky Business: Operational and Deployment Risk Management Tools for EHO Safety Officers" will be presented via webinar on Thursday, June 27, 2019 from 1400-1500 EDT. Please save the date. A flyer will be forthcoming shortly. Will be a primer for those interested in becoming a Safety Officer in a deployment capacity.

### **XI.Adjournment – CDR Michael Quinn**

The meeting was adjourned at 1433PM EST.



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**Appendix:** See the RedDOG Liaison Report -